

On The Question of Synonymy in German

Dauletbaeva Raygul

Karakalpak State University, Uzbekistan

Abstract: In this article we are talking about the synonymy of the German language, the shades of the meaning of the word and the most effective methods and essences of the comparative method are determined.

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Nowadays linguists often face the problem of conveying the proper meaning when translating from Russian into German and vice versa. The difficulty lies in the fact that in Russian the number of synonyms exceeds their presence in German. This is especially pronounced in literary translations. Various branches of linguistics are engaged in solving this problem. There is no single universally recognized definition of synonyms in the linguistic literature, just as there is no single approach to establishing synonymy. For example, in the Dictionary of Linguistic Terms, O. S. Akhmanova (M., 1966) synonyms are defined as "those members of a thematic group who: a) belong to the same part of speech and b) are so close in meaning that their correct use in speech requires precise knowledge of the semantic shades and stylistic properties distinguishing them." In the encyclopedia "Russian Language" (Moscow, 1979), T. G. Vinokur defines synonyms as "words of one part of speech that have completely or partially identical lexical meanings." Thus, we believe that synonyms are words of the same part of speech that have a similar meaning, but differ from each other in shades of lexical meaning and use in speech. Synonyms in the language form a grouping of words and phrases that are systemic in nature. To solve this problem, linguistics uses the most effective methods: comparative and comparative.

The comparative method is also used in applied linguistic disciplines – in the theory and practice of compiling bilingual dictionaries and translation, in the methodology of teaching a second language. The comparative method is also used to study the degree and nature of the influence of one language on another as a result of historical and territorial contacts. The comparison makes it possible not only to reveal the specifics of the studied phenomena in each language, but also to know their general linguistic or individual linguistic properties. New problems and research goals introduce changes in the techniques and methodology of analysis, which can be comparatively comparative and comparatively typological. The comparative method is a system of techniques and methods of analysis used to identify common and special features in the compared languages. With the comparative methodology, the comparison of languages is the basis of learning. The main methods of comparative language learning are: establishing the basis of comparison, comparative interpretation and typological characteristics. The method of parallel study consists in the fact that the facts and phenomena of the compared languages are studied in each language using the techniques and methods of the descriptive method, and the results obtained are compared.

The essence of the comparative method is to study the facts of the language at a certain historical period. Comparative study of languages makes it possible to identify the structural features of different languages.

Synonyms in the German literary language appear either due to borrowings, for example, *stören* — *inkommodieren* (from the French *commode* "convenient"), or due to the penetration of

dialectal words into the literary language, for example, Fleischer — Metzger (South and West German), or as a result of changes in meanings.

When borrowing words from other languages, synonyms form a grouping of words and phrases that is systemic in nature. Convincing arguments in favor of systematic synonyms are given, in particular, in the works of Yu. D. Apresyan [1]. He sees the manifestation of consistency in the close synchronic connection between polysemy and synonymy. In addition to these arguments, the following considerations can also be given.

Firstly, synonyms are opposed by the antonyms stark, kräftig — schwach; klug, gescheit — dumm, etc., although, of course, semantic oppositions of this kind are quantitatively small [2].

Secondly, quite numerous groups of synonyms are united within a synonymic series according to some naturally manifested feature, for example, an increase or decrease in the degree of property, quality, intensity of action, etc. (fähig - begabt — talentvoll — genial, Scheu — Angst — Schrecken — Entsetzen, werfen — schleudern), the juxtaposition of a permanent property (schüchtern, schamig), temporary (verlegen, verschämt), etc.

Changes in the meanings of words can be traced on a specific example. Let's take the verb gehen as an illustration. In a short explanatory dictionary from the Duden series [3], 9 meanings of this word are indicated. However, only in the meaning of "go" is the verb schreiten synonymous with it, in the meanings of "visit", "function", etc. other words already act as synonyms for gehen.

To proceed from the fact that words are synonymous, and not meanings, seems to us incorrect, since there is no polysemous word, all the nominative meanings of which would be common with all the meanings of another word. Moreover, it may have common meanings with many words, the number of these words is different and in some cases may be equal to the number of its nominative meanings. In our case gehen has common nominative meanings with schreiten, kommen, fahren, laufen, weggehen, etc. depending on which meaning of gehen we will compare other words or, more precisely, the meanings of other words to establish synonymous relationships. From what has been said, it follows that not words, but individual meanings are in synonymous relations with each other.

Let's turn to the criteria that are proposed to establish the synonymy of lexico-semantic variants of words. In addition to the criterion of proximity of the subject-logical content, which has just been mentioned, there are also such as constructive generality, coincidence of compatibility, interchangeability, belonging to the same type of concepts — generic or specific. Let's analyze several examples from the point of view of the criterion of constructive generality. In the series ablehnen — sich weigern, the verb ablehnen (to refuse something, to reject something) is transitive, it requires, therefore, a direct complement, and sich weigern (to refuse, experiencing internal resistance, to do what someone demands, orders) it is used only with an infinitive turn. In the sich fürchten — grausen series, the synonym sich fürchten (to be afraid) requires a prepositional complement (vor jemandem), whereas grausen (to be terrified) is used without an object and only in an impersonal form. Such a criterion as "substitutability" in the same context or in contexts similar in meaning, without feeling a noticeable change in the meaning of the utterance as a result of substitution, is very popular among linguists. If we analyze the linguistic literature from the point of view of what types of semantic differences are seen between synonyms, we will have to state that most researchers limit themselves to a general indication that synonyms differ in shades of meaning. It seems to us that when determining the shades of the meaning of a word, it is important to take into account the context and lexical environment in which this lexico-semantic variant is used, i.e. to take into account whether we are talking about living or inanimate objects, about people or animals, about objective or subjective utterance, etc. For example: halten — stehenbleiben (according to there is no difference in relation to people, there is in relation to means of transport: halten is used when it comes to any, usually regular stop, stehenbleiben — more often about stopping for a special reason); ertragen — vertragen (ertragen simply states the overcoming of something: heat, losses, hunger; vertragen emphasizes that overcoming something — ridicule, criticism, etc. — is associated with subjective abilities

and characteristics), etc.

Stylistically unlimited synonyms can be divided into equivalent and unequal synonyms.

Equivalent synonyms can be complete (if their meaning and usage coincide) and incomplete (if they differ only in usage). Examples: halten and stehenbleiben (stand - in relation to a person) are full synonyms; Meer and See (sea). — incomplete, since one can say: das Meer (but not die See) bedeckt einen großen Teil der Erdkugel, Leutnant zur See (but not zum Meer).

Unequal synonyms differ in shades of meaning and for the most part in use. These latter are the most numerous. There are quite a large number of synonymous dictionaries in German lexicography. Among the published dictionaries, two types can be found: dictionaries where synonymic series are mixed with thematic ones (this includes dictionaries like Pelzer's dictionary) and synonymic dictionaries like Gerner and Kempke, where a strict selection of synonyms is carried out, but no differences between them are given. The only dictionary so far that gives both these and other information is the above-mentioned synonymous dictionary of the Duden series. In addition to the synonymic series, it also contains a lengthy interpretation of the differences in the meaning and use of the members of each synonymic series, as well as illustrative examples, including those borrowed from the literature.

Synonyms, regardless of their status, form a certain micro-system or synonymic series. The complexity and diversity of the relations of synonyms lies, in particular, in the fact that this micro-system sometimes goes beyond the synonymic series. This is the case in cases where extremely polar units are no longer synonymous in the sense we understand. In such cases, the synonymous series intersects with the thematic group. There is a relationship between the thematic group and the synonymic series: the thematic group unites several synonymic series.

In the work on synonyms, synonymic series and thematic groups should be distinguished, especially since in some dictionaries of synonyms there is a practice of combining them, and the authors bring them under a more general sign of quality, going back to the conceptual content of the genus.

References

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